

Explaining protests

A July 29 letter, "Protest dissent," accused participants in protests at the Concord Naval Weapons Station of being destructive, not constructive. Mr. Tanner, the letter's author, also reprimands protesters for not notifying their elected representatives of their position.

Clearly the writer is unaware that such protests are among the many tactics used by the numerous individuals and organizations working for peace and justice. He also seems to miss the point of actions such as that involving 2,000 people at the Concord Naval Weapons Station on June 12 and 13, and the ongoing vigil there.

As program coordinator for the Mt. Diablo Peace Center, I have found that many people share the misconceptions of Mr. Tanner. The peace center and others collected 34,500 signatures in Contra Costa County for last year's countywide ballot initiative asking for a halt to shipments of weapons through Contra Costa on their way to Central America. Despite the image of conservatism here, over 100,000 Contra Costans voted in favor of this initiative.

We also just collected another 3,400 signatures on a similar effort directly addressed to Congress. A major purpose of these and other efforts, including protests, is to demonstrate just many people here feel that arming the proxy Contra army, which engages in mass terrorism, is morally wrong and not in our national interest.

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